

**Testimony in Support of HB 5**

**Bonnie Lorang  
Director of Governmental Affairs  
Montana Independent Telecommunications Systems (MITS)**

**Good Morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Bonnie Lorang. I am the Director of Governmental Affairs for Montana Independent Telecommunications Systems (MITS).**

**MITS represents telephone cooperatives and their wireline and cellular subsidiaries operating across rural Montana. We rise in support of this bill.**

**The wireless affiliates of Montana rural cooperative telecommunications companies have stepped up to the plate. They have implemented aggressive cellular build-out plans in some of the most rural areas of our state. There now are cellular towers in places like Crow Agency and Lodgegrass – Saco, Flaxville, Froid and Chester. Sagebrush Cellular has nearly 50 towers in eastern Montana - 24 constructed within the past 16 months.**

**HB 5 recognizes the challenges facing wireless companies committed to building out facilities in the very rural areas of Montana. Section 28 provides tax stability to rural wireless companies. It also offers incentives to expand their cellular footprint into even more rural areas. We believe that HB5 will spur the deployment of cellular telecommunications in rural Montana. We urge a do pass.**

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**Bonnie Lorang**

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